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"A Deep Waterway to the Sea"

The Development Of The Waterways.



**Statement by James Hunter Duthie,
Secretary of the
NATIONAL WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION
OF CANADA,
before the
INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION
Toronto, Ontario, Hearing
October, 1920**

"EVERY LAKEPORT A SEAPORT"

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National Waterways Association of Canada

306 Stair Building
Toronto - Ont.

An organization formed to further the development of water transportation in Canada, and to continue the work that has been carried on systematically during the past ten years by its members, advocating the construction of a deep waterway from the great lakes to the sea by way of the St. Lawrence river, which has now become an international issue.

**Address all communications to the NATIONAL
WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION., TORONTO, CAN.**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WATERWAYS.

The ability to place its produce and its manufactured goods in the home markets and in the markets of the world at a minimum of cost, makes a successful nation.

The cost of carriage varies according to the method used for transportation, in the following ratio :

Lowest Cost	All Water Route.
Next	Lake and Rail Route.
Highest Cost	All Rail Route.

Traffic can be handled by an all water route at about one-third the cost of rail transportation and by a rail and water route at about two-thirds the cost of rail shipment. Therefore, the use of the waterways for the carriage of traffic is essentially necessary if we are to obtain transportation at a minimum of cost, effect the greatest possible saving in tolls and bring the best returns to the producer and manufacturer.

Due to the vast extent of territory that has to be reached on this continent, attention in the past has been directed to the extension of railway lines rather than to the development of water transportation. The railways have done their best to meet the requirements of trade but, with an ever increasing volume of traffic offering for shipment, it has been physically impossible for them to handle the business promptly and efficiently; that condition will continue to prevail no matter how much money is expended in improving railway facilities.

The tonnage that can be handled through railway terminals is limited and when an attempt is made to take care of more business than they are equipped to handle, congestion is the inevitable result, the movement of traffic throughout the country is impeded and occasionally a tie up of the entire transportation system is the result with tremendous losses not only to the public but to the railways, due to their inability to get proper service from their equipment.

A railway company cannot earn a revenue from wheels that are standing idle and every day cars are allowed to stand on track without movement, means a loss to the carrier that, in the aggregate, amounts to millions of dollars per annum.

As well might we take a wheelbarrow and attempt to do the work of a motor truck as expect the railways to perform the functions that properly belong to the waterways of our country.

WILL NOT INJURE RAILWAYS.

The railways are opposed to the development of the waterways for transportation purposes, fearing that water competition will reduce their earning power. Speaking from an experience of over 45 years in the transportation business, both rail and ocean, I take issue with that conclusion and believe that instead of being a source of injury to the rail lines the development of the waterways will enable the carrying companies to make better use of their equipment and increase the earning power of their rolling stock. By taking care of the surplus traffic the waterways would relieve congestion on the railways, enabling them to handle traffic more promptly and efficiently, with much lower terminal and other expenses than when congestion of traffic takes place.

Possibly the best illustration that can be given of this is a reference to a situation that is undoubtedly familiar to you all.

Between Buffalo at the eastern end of Lake Erie and the head of Lake Superior there are over Sixty-five million tons of business annually handled by vessel on the great lakes. This traffic is brought to the lake

front with a comparatively short rail haul, the consequence being that cars are in constant use instead of being tied up for weeks and sometimes months, with idle wheels, due to congestion of traffic at terminal points. In connection with this lake trade delays on the railways are carefully guarded against and are reduced to the minimum, the railways being in a position to secure better earnings from the use of their rolling stock for this short haul traffic than is possible with long haul business when congestion occurs.

It is hardly necessary to outline what would happen should anything occur that would make it necessary to turn this heavy tonnage over to the railways for carriage to and from the head of the lakes; the railway systems would be paralyzed and a condition arise that would bring disaster on the country. No better illustration could be given of the need of the waterways for the carriage of traffic and no selfish interests can be permitted to stand in the way of their further improvement.

The losses sustained by producers through the inability of the railways to take care of the business offered for shipment have been enormous and provision must be made for the handling of this trade. It is nothing less than criminal to urge increased production unless we are prepared to take care of the produce when it is offered for shipment.

LAKE ONTARIO TRAFFIC LIMITED.

Of the inland lakes, Ontario alone is not used extensively for water transportation. One might travel by aeroplane from Kingston to Hamilton without seeing a single cargo steamer, worthy of the name, on the lake.

We hope to see ocean vessels coming up the River St. Lawrence, entering Lake Ontario, steaming west and turning into Toronto Harbor, unloading part of their cargoes here, filling the vacant space with other traffic consigned to the head of the lakes, for distribution to the western section of the country and returning east with cargoes of grain and flour for the markets of the old world.

During the late war, splendid service was given by the railways of this continent but occasionally they fell down; it was the waterways that saved the freedom of the world and the way in which men and supplies were taken across the Atlantic was an achievement that should cause every man who has the welfare of the country at heart to forget petty jealousies and realize that what is good for the country as a whole is also good for them. The waterways proved the salvation of the country in the late war and the waterways will save us from heavy financial losses each year if they are utilized to the fullest possible extent for the carriage of traffic.

PROJECT NOT A NEW ONE.

The project for the construction of a deep waterway between the great lakes and the sea is not by any means a new one. One of the first propositions advanced called for the building of a canal from a point near Collingwood on the Georgian Bay to a point near Toronto on Lake Ontario, to be known as the Huron and Ontario Ship Canal. The late F. Chase Capreol of the City of Toronto gave the last years of his life and spent a great deal of money in the attempt to secure its construction. The proposition, however, did not meet with the approval of the people and after his death it was dropped. In more recent years three different propositions have been prominently before the people for consideration viz.—

1st. **THE LAKES TO THE GULF SCHEME.** This proposition called for the construction of a deep waterway from Chicago to the Gulf of Mexico. The United States government appointed a commission, headed by Gen. W. H. Bixby, to make a report thereon. In its report to Congress this commission said:

"A 24 foot waterway from Chicago to the Gulf of Mexico has never been considered by Congress, but its cost would be enormous, and even if constructed it never would be used by the vessels for which intended."

2nd. **THE GEORGIAN BAY CANAL SCHEME.** This project was given serious consideration by the Canadian Government but it was found that the long canal mileage involved in its construction made it impracticable for ocean going vessels. Although there has never been any public declaration by the government on the subject, it is an assured fact that it will not be built because, like the Lakes to the Gulf scheme, even if it were constructed it never would be used by the vessels for which intended.

3rd. **DEEPENING THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER.** This project is now before your commission for investigation and report.

The St. Lawrence river forms a natural artery from the lakes to the ocean and, by taking advantage of it, we can secure a deep waterway that will permit of the passage of ocean going vessels with the minimum of canal mileage and the maximum of free running water, two essential necessities for a channel of commerce that is to be of service to the people. We believe that the St. Lawrence river presents the only feasible plan by which a channel of deep water navigation between the great lakes and the sea, can be secured.

We believe that when the engineers appointed to investigate the project report to your commission that this statement will be borne out, and hope that after you have heard all the evidence on the subject, the report of your commission will also be a favorable one.

POWER DEVELOPMENT WILL PAY COST OF CONSTRUCTION.

The deepening of the St. Lawrence river will undoubtedly prove to be an expensive work, but in connection therewith it is possible to develop electric energy sufficient to pay interest on the entire cost of reconstructing this waterway. This being the case, the opposition to the project on the ground of expense, falls to the ground.

It is very desirable that all the electric energy possible be developed in connection with the deepening of the river, but it should be borne in mind that the construction of a channel of deep water navigation is the main and paramount issue. Power is a matter of local interest to Ontario, Quebec and New York State; a deep waterway is an economic necessity for the benefit of the entire country.

RESULT OF TEN YEARS WORK.

Surprise has been expressed in some quarters that this deep waterway project should so suddenly have loomed large in the public eye and become a matter of international interest, and very briefly I will explain how this has come about.

In July 1909, I placed before the Dominion Government, in concrete form, the need for better and more adequate facilities for the movement of the commerce of the country, particularly the crops of the Canadian West, and urged that action be taken to deepen the Welland Canal, as the first link in the construction of a deep waterway to the sea; also for the building of a line of railway from the west to Hudson Bay, which could

be utilized for the movement of a portion of the western grain crop to Europe. Both of these suggestions were acted upon by the government and they are now in course of construction. It is probable, however, that the Hudson Bay route will be open and in operation long before it will be possible to complete the work of deepening the St. Lawrence. In dealing with these matters at that time the following statement was made :

"The St. Lawrence river is the greatest national asset in the possession of Canada, and it is one that should be appreciated at its true value. It is quite certain that if it were in the hands of our neighbors across the line it would long ago have been used for the purposes of deep water navigation."

I believe that statement to be true and the fact of the Erie Canal being in operation would not have been allowed to stand in the way of the improvement of the St. Lawrence had destiny placed that river in United States instead of Canadian territory. The fact that the St. Lawrence is largely in Canadian territory does not alter the case, it should be utilized to the fullest extent for the benefit of the people of both countries, in the movement of commerce.

The deepening of the St. Lawrence and the completion of the new Welland canal however, will not provide a satisfactory deep waterway to the head of the lakes; there is work to be done in Lake Erie, the Livingstone channel, Lake St. Clair and other points before we will secure what is wanted.

Realizing that fact, as soon as the Canadian government decided upon the reconstruction of the Welland canal and the building of a railway to Hudson Bay, I moved to the city of Detroit and, for a period of nearly ten years sought to enlist the co-operation of the people of the United States in support of the enterprise. Correspondence was carried on with the Commercial Club of Duluth, the Merchants and Manufacturers Association of Milwaukee, the Boards of Commerce of Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit, also through articles written for the press, urging support for the movement.

In January 1914, Henry Clay, then Mayor of Windsor, Ontario, called a convention of the lake cities of Canada to consider the deep waterway project and it was due to that meeting that attention was finally directed to the need for energetic work in support of the proposition.

In the United States the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence Tidewater Association was formed and it has succeeded in making the subject a matter for discussion throughout the entire United States. In Canada we have our own association, composed of the men who have worked for years on the proposition, which, together with other organizations now taking hold of the matter we hope will be able to influence opinion throughout the Dominion in favor of the project, and we believe the day is not far distant when the slogan adopted at the Windsor convention of 1914 "EVERY LAKEPORT A SEAPORT" will become an accomplished fact.

OPPOSITION OF SELFISH INTERESTS.

Opposition to the improvement of the St. Lawrence has developed in several quarters, all apparently actuated by selfish motives regardless of what is best for the people generally. Some of the interests opposing the St. Lawrence development are the Atlantic Steamship Lines which fear the new element of competition that will come through the opening of a deep waterway; the railways, whose rates will be affected by water competition, and the seaboard cities who consider that their commercial supremacy is at stake.

Most of this opposition is based on fears that are groundless and those campaigning against the project overlook the fact that it is impossible to upbuild one section of the country without upbuilding the whole country. Neither Canada nor the United States would be justified in spending money on a project that will not be of real benefit to the country.

New York City and New York State have taken a prominent part in opposing the project and it is quite proper that they should protect their own interests, they have a perfect right to do so provided that in so doing injury is not done to the country at large. In this particular case the interests of New York State cannot be permitted to stand in the way of an economic necessity that will be of benefit to the entire country; the greatest good for the greatest number should be the main consideration. Besides, New York City will not decline as a world harbor because ocean vessels reach the head of the lakes; the increased volume of production obtained because of the ability of the West and North-West to market its produce will inevitably result in making conditions better even for New York.

Some of the statements made in opposition to the development of the St. Lawrence are simply ludicrous but, because the people generally are not well informed on the subject, are likely to have an influence in moulding public opinion. A dispatch sent from Washington to the press of the country under date of April 14th, read: "Construction by the government at this time of a ship canal to connect Lakes Erie and Ontario is disapproved in a report sent to Congress to-day by the engineer corps. The report said the canal would not justify the expense until an outlet for deep sea ships through the St. Lawrence had been provided."

Canada is now constructing this canal and there is no one in this country that has publicly disapproved of their action in so doing, but the Washington dispatch seeks to make the people of the United States believe that they will have to pay for this work. It is rather unlikely that the engineer corps of the United States made a report such as that referred to and the probabilities are that the story was manufactured for the purpose of creating opposition to the development of the St. Lawrence river.

Speaking before the Kiwanis Club in Buffalo recently, Congressman Wallace Dempsey of Lockport, N.Y., said: in part:

"It is not practical economically for the ocean vessel, expensive to construct and maintain, to navigate the lakes, much less rivers and canals. This is particularly true of the expensive type of vessels that must be constructed for the St. Lawrence route to be proof against the icebergs that beset that northern route the year round. The lower St. Lawrence too, is subject to fogs which make navigation impossible."

Mr. Dempsey's statements regarding the St. Lawrence route show a lamentable ignorance of facts. It may be interesting to him to learn that the value of the imports and exports by way of Montreal are second only to those of the city of New York on this side of the Atlantic and, if he were to take a trip to Europe by the St. Lawrence route he will find, from first hand knowledge, that the icebergs and fogs of which he speaks exist largely in his own imagination.

Another sample of the kind of statements made to delay the deepening of the St. Lawrence is contained in an address made by Mr. William Fitzsimmons of Albany, N.Y., before the Atlantic Deeper Waterways convention at Atlantic City on the 8th. inst., he is reported to have said:

"If the United States Government lends its financial aid to the plan of creating the St. Lawrence river into a deeper channel to the sea, there will have been created a Dardanelles problem in the United States,

with a Foreign Government dictating the movement of United States vessels and perhaps warships in and out of the Great Lakes."

With a boundary line invisible extending for thousands of miles between our two countries, without a gun or fortification of any kind in sight, Mr. Fitzsimmons' vivid imagination conjures a Dardanelles problem on the St. Lawrence because we are trying to make a deep waterway to the sea that will be of great benefit to the United States as well as to Canada. It is hardly possible that such an argument will appeal to an intelligent people. Statements such as those referred to are not likely to carry much weight either with your commission or with those who are capable of analysing them at their true value.

The best way to promote goodwill between the people of our two countries is to work together in matters that are of mutual benefit; there is no project before the people for consideration that will prove as serviceable in cementing the good feeling now existing between citizens of Canada and the United States as that of providing a channel of commerce that will provide access to the markets of the world at a minimum of cost for transportation that will be mutually beneficial.

WILL NOT INJURE ERIE CANAL.

Another argument advanced against the St. Lawrence route is the probable injury that will be sustained by the Erie Canal should this new channel of commerce be opened up, and it is one that is entitled to careful consideration. We have no desire to injure the Erie canal and do not believe that the traffic now moving by that route will be seriously interfered with when the St. Lawrence is opened for deep water navigation. Most of the grain and other traffic that will move by way of the St. Lawrence when the deep waterway is completed does not now move by way of the Erie canal but goes by rail from Buffalo to the seaboard; the Erie canal gets but a small portion of it. It is no doubt true that the railways between Buffalo and New York will lose considerable traffic when the new route to the sea is opened for business, but the loss in tonnage will be more than compensated for by doing away with congestion of traffic, which will enable the railways to make better use of their rolling stock and give better service to the people in connection with business that it is now impossible to move owing to the fact that railway equipment is tied up and idle through congestion on the different lines. The deepening of the St. Lawrence will not seriously affect the tonnage carried on the Erie canal and it will still be able to carry on satisfactorily notwithstanding the diversion of traffic from Buffalo that will take place when the new channel of commerce is opened up. The alleged injury that will be done the Erie canal through the deepening of the St. Lawrence river is the most plausible argument advanced against the project, but even that contention will be found to be groundless upon a complete investigation of the facts.

The deepening of the St. Lawrence will not injuriously affect the Erie canal but is more likely to increase the business that will move by that route through the increased development of trade that will result from the improvement in our transportation facilities, which will eliminate to a large extent congestion of traffic on the railway systems of the country and bring about increased production.

There has not been a single argument advanced by the people of New York State against the deepening of the St. Lawrence for purposes of transportation that has not for its foundation a selfish desire to promote their own interests at the expense of the entire country.

WILL BENEFIT MONTREAL.

Opposition to the project also developed at the Montreal hearing before your commission and again it is the interests of Montreal against the country at large. The arguments advanced at Montreal, however, were of a somewhat different nature than those of New York State, the contention being that while the St. Lawrence should be deepened and made suitable for vessels of large capacity between the great lakes and Montreal, they should not proceed further than that city but transfer their cargoes to ocean vessels at Montreal, also that it would not pay ocean ships to make the passage up the lakes.

That may be Montreal's view of the matter but they will not find many who will agree with them. When it was decided to bring ocean vessels to Montreal and make it the terminus for ocean trade instead of the ancient city of Quebec, Montreal had no objections to offer on the ground that by so doing it might injure the city of Quebec, and they have as little right now to object to ocean ships passing Montreal and proceeding further. At one time the maximum depth between Quebec and Montreal was only 12 feet but by continuous dredging we now have a channel 35 ft. deep and 600 feet wide through Lake St. Peter.

Whether or not it will pay ocean ships to reach the head of the lakes remains to be seen, but with boats of good carrying capacity it will no doubt prove to be a profitable business for them. It must be borne in mind that ships making such a trip will have the entire earnings from the original shipping point to the head of the lakes.

Many different views have been expressed with regard to the class of vessels necessary for this trade. It has been said that no ocean line would send their ships to the head of the lakes, also that boats suitable for lake service would not do for the ocean and vice versa. This matter was dealt with somewhat fully in an article written for the Detroit "News," in 1912. It is not likely that the ocean lines would divert the ships now used by them in their regular service, to the lake trade, but it is more than likely that existing ocean lines would build boats suitable for this trade and seek to secure the tonnage offering.

The opening of a deep waterway to the sea will have the effect of stimulating the shipbuilding industry on the great lakes with the result that ships suitable for the lake and ocean trade will be built with capital provided by Canada and the United States and a merchant marine service will be secured that will prove of great value to the people. Vessels of 5000 to 7000 tons will probably be found to be the best for the service in its initial stages, but later on it will no doubt be possible to provide for boats of larger capacity.

The extension of ocean navigation to Montreal was good for that city and its further extension to the great lakes will prove equally valuable to the entire country. We do not believe that Montreal will be seriously injured by the completion of the deep waterway but that, on the contrary, the progress and development of the country due to that improvement in transportation facilities will ultimately make Montreal a greater city than it is to-day.

DEEP WATERWAY AN ECONOMIC NECESSITY.

There are certain outstanding facts in connection with the transportation problems of this continent that are incontrovertible, viz.—

It is a physical impossibility for the railways to provide facilities for the prompt and efficient handling of the commerce of the country.

Tremendous losses have been incurred through the inability of the

people to find a market for their produce due to lack of shipping facilities.

It is the duty of the government to provide facilities for the carriage of this traffic; this can only be done by utilizing to their fullest capacity the magnificent stretch of waterways with which this continent has been endowed.

Congestion of traffic on the railways can be eliminated to a large extent but this can only be done through the efficient use of the waterways.

The Western and North-Western sections of this continent call for relief from a situation that is intolerable; produce that cannot be moved because of the inability of the railways to handle it is allowed to go to waste when it is urgently required for world use. No combination of selfish interests should be permitted to imperil the welfare and development of any section of the country.

Through the Hudson Bay route, Canada will have one channel by which its produce will move to the markets of the world at a minimum of cost. A deep waterway to the sea by way of St. Lawrence river will open another channel of commerce that will be mutually beneficial to the people of the United States and Canada.

The saving in transportation tolls through the construction of a deep waterway to the sea will be of incalculable benefit to the producer and consumer; just what the saving in tolls will amount to will depend upon the manner in which the business is conducted. If the railways and the railway commissions are permitted to get control of the rates and throttle competition the water route will not be as productive of results as it would otherwise. What is required is unrestricted competition to get the best results and the railways and railway commissions must keep their "Hands Off" this deep waterway traffic.

The construction of a deep waterway to the sea is an economic necessity and the people demand that it be placed at their disposal for transportation purposes. No section of the country has a right to oppose its construction for purely selfish reasons and it is a certainty that the day is not far distant when the slogan adopted at the Windsor convention of 1914 will become a reality and we will see

EVERY LAKEPORT A SEAPORT A PEACE MEMORIAL.

No more fitting memorial to the maintenance of 100 years peace between our two countries could be conceived than that of providing, by mutual agreement, a deep waterway to the sea that will prove of equal benefit to the people of Canada and the United States. Alarmists may talk of Dardanelles problems and other possibilities of war between the two countries but so long as we retain our sanity there is no trouble that may arise that cannot be settled by discussion of vexed questions on terms of good will such as exist to-day between Canada and the United States.

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